

An interview with Ruel F. Burns, Sr. (1)

RUEL F. BURNS, SR.

An Interview Conducted by

William Pickett

June 8, 1981

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"WORKS OF REFERENCE"

RUEL FOX BURNS, SR.

Date of Birth: March 3, 1893

Where born: Sullivan County, IN

Children: Ruel F. Burns, Jr.  
Mrs. Dale F. (Betty Caye) Hudson

Names of parents: Uriah C. and Adda Fox Burns

Education: Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology - Class of 1915  
Honorary Doctorate Degree

Present Business Position: Chairman Emeritus of the Board of The Weston  
Paper and Manufacturing Co.  
President of The Weston-Wabash Foundation

Fraternal and Service Club affiliations: Rockford, Illinois, Masonic Lodge No. 102;  
Sigma Nu Fraternity; Terre Haute Lodge No. 86, B. P. O. Elks; The Country  
Club of Terre Haute

Business and Professional Affiliations: Technical Association of the Pulp and  
Paper Industry; Board of Managers of Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology;  
Member of the Vigo County Park and Recreation Board

Other Memberships, Affiliations and Activities: Honorary Member of the St. Marys,  
Ohio, Fishing Game Association. Past President of the Wabash Valley  
Horsemen's Association; former Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce;  
former Board Member of the Crittenden Home; former Member of the Wabash  
Valley Fair Board; former Member of the Board of Directors of the Y.M.C.A.;  
Past President of Family Services Association.

Officer in the Air Force, World War I -- former member, American Legion,  
St. Marys, Ohio

Hobbies, interests: Shooting, riding, writing, swimming, dancing, etc.

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RUEL F. BURNS, SR.

Tape 1

June 9, 1981

Weston Paper & Mfg. Co. Mill Offices, West Voorhees St.,  
Terre Haute, IN

INTERVIEWER: William B. Pickett

TRANSCRIBER: Kathleen M. Skelly

For: Vigo County Oral History Program

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WBP: I am William Pickett, and I'm talking today with Ruel F. Burns, Sr. Today is June 9, 1981, and we're at Mr. Burns' office on the grounds of Weston Paper Company. Mr. Burns has had a long and illustrious career. He has spent most of his life in Terre Haute, going all the way back to about 1906, is that right?

BURNS: 'Three.

WBP: Nineteen /hundred7 three.

Mr. Burns, where were you born?

BURNS: I was born in a little mining town, Jackson Hill in Sullivan county.

WBP: All right. And did you spend your childhood there?

BURNS: I went to grade school there until I was ten years old, and then my family moved to Terre Haute.

WBP: What was your father's occupation?

BURNS: My father was a farm boy. He came into Jackson Hill when they were building the mine and got a job in the company store.

WBP: Let's see. Was that a deep-shaft mine?

BURNS: That was a . . . I believe the first deep-shaft mine in Indiana.

WBP: Uh-huh. Again, what county was that in?

BURNS: Sullivan County.

WBP: Sullivan County. And why did he happen to move to Terre Haute?

BURNS: The company moved him to Terre Haute.

WBP: I see. And then you continued your education in Terre Haute?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Where did you live in Terre Haute?

BURNS: Fourteen fifty-one Poplar Street.

WBP: Did you live there all your childhood?

BURNS: No. We moved after a couple of years there to 305 North 8th Street, because it was closer to my father's office which was in the Grand Opera House building.

WBP: I see. Did your father keep that same job throughout his life?

BURNS: He was sort of an accountant at first, but later he became a salesman.

WBP: Did you have brothers and sisters?

BURNS: I had one brother who was seven years younger than I and a sister who was nine years younger than I.

WBP: Um hm.

You mentioned the Grand Opera House. Is this the building that was right next to the Terre Haute House?

BURNS: Yes. It has been demolished.

WBP: It was also an office building?

BURNS: That's right.

WBP: Tell us about your . . . where did you finish your grade school education and then go to high school?

BURNS: I finished grade school at the old Thompson School at 12th and Ohio in 1908 and went to Wiley High School. Graduated from Wiley in 1911.

WBP: And then you went . . . in 1911 you . . . what did you do then?

BURNS: I worked that summer, of course. And in the fall I entered Rose Polytechnic /Institute, now Rose-Hulman/ and graduated from Rose Polytechnic in 1915 in mechanical engineering.

WBP: And this is . . . at that time, Rose Polytechnic was located where the Chauncey Rose Junior High School is now.

BURNS: That's right.

WBP: On North 13th . . .

BURNS: At 13th and Locust.

WBP: During your . . . before you went to Rose-Hulman, you told me earlier that you had a job for the telegraph company.

BURNS: When I was about 13 years old, I was a messenger boy for the old Postal Telegraph Company.

WBP: And did that make you familiar with the city?

BURNS: Yes. I was well acquainted with Terre Haute then, because it wasn't so large. I rode a bicycle and delivered telegrams and collected telegrams and also did errands.

WBP: Can you tell us a little bit about Terre Haute in those days? What it looked like, how . . . was it busy, what the street materials were made of and what made life interesting in those days?

BURNS: Well, there weren't so many paved streets. I know that Poplar Street that passed our first house wasn't paved, and there were many horse-drawn vehicles. I know that Pat Malone used to drive into Terre Haute from his dairy farm to deliver milk.

WBP: Pat Malone?

BURNS: Yes. And the grocery stores all had delivery wagons drawn by horses. And the big brewery wagons were drawn by horses. There were very few automobiles then.

WBP: There were streetcars, electric streetcars?

BURNS: Yep, we had electric streetcars. I remember one that went down South 7th Street, one that went down South 13th Street, and one that went north to Collett Park, which was a grand trip then. And North 19th Street . . .

WBP: Was it easy to get from place to place in Terre Haute in those days?

BURNS: Oh, comparatively easy because Terre Haute wasn't so large, and most people lived pretty close to a streetcar line. But I know on Poplar Street we were about three blocks from a streetcar line, which wasn't much of a walk.

WBP: On 8th Street, was there a streetcar line when you lived there?

BURNS: No, there was no streetcar line on North 8th Street.

WBP: But there was on North . . . was there one on North 7th?

BURNS: I don't remember that there was one on North 7th.

WBP: I don't believe there was.

BURNS: There was one on North 3rd Street, I believe, and one on North 13th Street.

WBP: Um hm. I see.

Did you ever go from . . . to another city from Terre Haute?

BURNS: Later we got interurbans.

WBP: Do you have an idea when those started?

BURNS: I think about 1910 or '11. That's a guess.

WBP: Yes.

BURNS: But the interurbans went to Sullivan, to Paris,

BURNS: and to Clinton and I believe to Indianapolis, later.

WBP: Do you remember riding the interurban?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: To Sullivan?

BURNS: When I was in high school and we played football at Sullivan -- Wiley played football at Sullivan -- we always took the interurban down. And often I went hunting, [I would] take the interurban out 10 or 12 miles and hunt. And my father usually sent his horses down to a farmer friend near Prairie Creek, and I would ride the horses down there and then walk over to the interurban line and come back home.

WBP: Oh, I see. So, it seems as though it was rather convenient for people maybe of all ages to travel in those days after the interurbans came.

BURNS: That's right.

WBP: You delivered telegrams for a couple of years around 1906, 1907.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: What parts of the city would you most enjoy taking telegrams to?

BURNS: I liked to go down in the red light district to do an errand because the madams tipped generously.

WBP: Where was that red light district located, do you remember?

BURNS: On North 2nd and 3rd Street.

WBP: Was it a fairly sizable district? Or was it just two or three houses?

BURNS: Oh, it was a regular village from about Wabash Avenue up to Chestnut Street, and on 2nd and 3rd Street there were some real nice houses down there.

WBP: Um hmm.

Do you feel that they appealed to a fairly high-classed clientele or was it fairly working class?

WBP: Or both would you say?

BURNS: Tell me that again, will you please?

WBP: Was the clientele a fairly high class in the sense that they could afford quite a bit of money? Or was it a working class . . . maybe a lot of coal miners that patronized the red light district?

BURNS: There were all kinds. There were some real nice houses which, I imagine, were patronized by businessmen. And then there were some that were very poor and probably patronized by the same kind of men.

WBP: Were there any movements that you knew of in those days to try to limit or tear down or clear out the red light district?

BURNS: I don't recall of many.

WBP: In hindsight as you look back, would you say that Terre Haute was a booming place, a growing, bustling community in 1906, 1907 or would you . . . or do you remember very well?

BURNS: As I recall, it was not a booming town.

WBP: There was not a lot of new construction going on?

BURNS: No.

WBP: And newcomers weren't coming into the city?

BURNS: No. I don't believe it was growing fast back in those days.

WBP: Do you have a sense at any time . . . looking back on Terre Haute's history, would there be any time in your memory that you would consider it to be a boomtown?

BURNS: (no response)

WBP: When the population grew and there were many, many more stores coming in and it was a place where land speculators might come to earn a profit?

BURNS: Really, I can't recall a period like that.



WBP: Do you remember, where would be centers of activity in the downtown area prior to World War II? Where would people . . . where would you be most likely to find people gathered in the downtown area?

BURNS: (no response)

WBP: Would it be at the Terminal Arcade? I suppose there would be people waiting for interurbans there after 1911 or whenever they began.

BURNS: I can't remember exactly. I don't know whether the Grand Opera House, which was a beautiful theater, had been demolished by then.

WBP: I'm not sure the date that it was demolished either.

Do you remember going downtown to the theater for entertainment purposes?

BURNS: Often.

WBP: What would you do? Where would you go and what would you do for entertainment?

BURNS: Well, we had two variety shows. And I had a companion whose dad worked for a newspaper, and he received comps /complimentary tickets/, and we went to the variety shows nearly every week.

WBP: Where were they?

BURNS: One was the Lyric between 7th and 8th on the north side and one was the Varieties on the corner of 8th and Wabash, southwest corner. /731 Wabash/

WBP: Now, when you say variety show, what kinds of performances did they have?

BURNS: Oh, they had sometimes animals, sometimes a slack-wire artist, sometimes a song-and-dance team . . .

WBP: Was that the same as vaudeville?

BURNS: Yes. The name of the theater was the Varieties, and that's where they had the vaudeville shows.

WBP: Would you go every week, you say?

BURNS: Just about.

WBP: On what day?

BURNS: Oh, it depended on the . . . maybe our schedule at school.

WBP: Were there big crowds there?

BURNS: Yes. It was well attended.

WBP: Would they be in the night or during the day that they had shows?

BURNS: Both afternoon and evening. They'd have about eight acts.

WBP: Back in those days what was the basis in your memory of Terre Haute's economy? Where did most people work?

BURNS: Well, they worked at the brewery. They worked at Sparks Milling. They worked at the paper mill, and . . .

WBP: Sparks Milling was located where?

BURNS: . . . there were a lot of coal miners that lived in Terre Haute and took the miners' train out.

WBP: Where would they go? Where would the miners' train run?

BURNS: Well, one summer I worked at a coal mine. It was up near Tecumseh. I lived up there, but I'd come home on weekends. But when I'd go back Monday morning, I'd take the interurban to Clinton and then the miners' train from Clinton down to the mine at Tecumseh.

WBP: Tecumseh is in what county?

BURNS: I think it's in Vigo County. It's up the river about seven or eight miles.

WBP: It's up the river?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP:           Toward Clinton?

BURNS:        Yes.

WBP:           And would you get the train . . . would the  
train go out . . . well, no. There's an interurban  
that went out 13th Street, right?

BURNS:        Yep.

WBP:           Would you get . . . did you go out the inter-  
urban?

BURNS:        Yep, take the interurban to Clinton.

WBP:           All the way to Clinton?

BURNS:        Yep, then the miners' train from Clinton down.

WBP:           Down to Tecumseh you mean?

BURNS:        Yes.

WBP:           There were also miners' trains that some miners . . .

BURNS:        Went directly out of Terre Haute.

WBP:           Went directly out of Terre Haute?

BURNS:        Yep.

WBP:           So, mining was pretty . . . would you say that  
was the largest industry then?

BURNS:        I don't believe that was the largest, but there  
was . . . many miners in Terre Haute. I'm trying to  
think of other industries.

WBP:           Railroad shops, of course.

BURNS:        Yep, it was a great center for the railroads,  
because we had them running east and west and north  
and south.

WBP:           And, of course, I suppose it was a retailing  
center, too?

BURNS:        Yep. Main Street was pretty much like it is  
now, only it's a little decorated now.

WBP: Did you have the feeling that Main Street . . . .  
Were buildings being constructed then or had they  
already been there and they were simply being used?

BURNS: You know it seems to me that they were there.

WBP: Yep. I think they were, too. Most of them.  
What about the market? Do you remember a vegetable  
market?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Farmers would bring produce in.

BURNS: Up on North 2nd or 3rd Street.

WBP: Not far from the red light district then perhaps?

BURNS: Yep, pretty close. And it was a lively place.

WBP: All right.

After you went to Rose Polytechnic . . . you  
graduated from Rose Polytechnic; then you went into  
the Army Air Corps?

BURNS: No, I went to work for the Terre Haute Paper Com-  
pany.

WBP: I see. Right away.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: That was not Weston Paper?

BURNS: Yes, it was. We called it The Terre Haute  
Paper Company then.

WBP: I see. And you worked for how long then?

BURNS: Well, I worked until 1916 and '17 when I went  
into the army.

WBP: Did you live at home during this time?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: And what did you do with Terre Haute Paper  
Company?

BURNS: I worked in the mill on a paper machine.

WBP: You did the work of a laborer?

BURNS: Yep, uh-huh. Perhaps a skilled laborer.

WBP: Did you have an idea that you would want to learn the business and become a manager?

BURNS: That's right. That was my intention.

WBP: Is that how . . . is that the purpose for which you were hired?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: How big was the company at the time, do you remember that?

BURNS: We had three mills then: one in Rockford, Illinois, and one in St. Marys, Ohio.

WBP: And one in Terre Haute.

BURNS: One in Terre Haute.

WBP: Where was the one in Terre Haute located?

BURNS: The one where I began my career was out about 19th and Vandalia /railroad/, out northeast. And then we . . . in about 1916 or '15 we began building the south mill.

WBP: Where we are today?

BURNS: Where we are today. And it was while working there that I went into the air force.

WBP: So, you were working . . . you had just been working for the Terre Haute Paper Company a short time when they began to build the mill in the southern part of town?

BURNS: That's right.

WBP: Was it right adjacent to Commercial Solvents Corporation?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: How many people did Terre Haute Paper Company

WBP: employ? Do you remember that?

BURNS: I presume 300 -- 350 after we got the south mill going. We had both mills going, you know?

WBP: Yes.

What did they manufacture?

BURNS: We manufactured paper from straw, used at first as wrapping paper and then later as they began to make corrugated boxes, it was for corrugated.

WBP: So, this would be the material that went into cardboard boxes? You were making cardboard?

BURNS: Yep, corrugated containers.

WBP: And later on, Wabash Fibre Box would be purchased by Weston Paper?

BURNS: That's right.

WBP: And it'd be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Weston Paper?

BURNS: That's right.

WBP: What would be the . . . . Weston Paper would produce one part of the cardboard and Wabash Fibre Box would produce a different part, is that . . .

BURNS: No. Our mill at St. Marys would produce the heavy board that goes on the outside of the corrugation.

WBP: I see.

BURNS: Wabash Fibre made corrugated boxes from the paper we were making here and the paper we were making at St. Marys.

WBP: And it was during these days you were making paper from straw?

BURNS: Yes. Except at St. Marys, we made it from kraft and old papers.

WBP: When was Weston Paper or the Terre Haute Paper

WBP: Company . . . when was it established?

BURNS: I imagine close to 1900.

WBP: And it was called Terre Haute Paper when it was first established?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Therefore it was a local firm. And then later on, it was purchased by Weston. Is that . . .

BURNS: No. A gentleman by the name of Weston bought . . . established the paper mill. Or rather, I think his father-in-law owned the mill, and he /Weston/ was a salesman for his father-in-law. And later, he got charge of the mill.

WBP: I see. Do you know why they decided to establish the paper mill in Terre Haute?

BURNS: No, I don't remember. You see there was a mill over near Indianapolis. Do you remember where James Whitcomb Riley was born?

WBP: Yes. I've been to that house.

BURNS: What's the town's name?

WBP: Oh-ho. You mean . . . I know about the Riley house in Indianapolis. I don't know whether it's Greenfield, is it Greenfield?

BURNS: I believe so. But that's where this mill was.

WBP: I see.

BURNS: They abandoned it over there, and I think that the paper company organized the company and bought the equipment and moved it to Terre Haute.

WBP: I see. O.K.

When you . . . when the World War I broke out or at least when /the/ United States became involved in World War I, /in/ 1917, you then decided to go into the service or were you drafted? How did it work?

BURNS: I volunteered.

WBP: You volunteered. Why did you volunteer?

BURNS: Well, I believe it was because I could have my choice, and I had a classmate named Charles S. Duddleston from Rose who was in the air service. He encouraged me to join the air service.

WBP: You thought that would be an adventure?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: And then you learned to fly?

BURNS: Yeah, I learned to fly at Falls Field at Wichita Falls, Texas.

WBP: And what aircraft did you fly?

BURNS: The old Curtis Jenny training plane.

WBP: That was a bi-plane?

BURNS: Yep, bi-plane.

WBP: And you were being prepared to be a combat pilot?

BURNS: Well, I was going on to advanced flying, and it hadn't been decided yet whether I would be combat or bomber.

WBP: And then before the war was . . . you never got overseas?

BURNS: Never got overseas. I got overseas orders! But . . .

WBP: The war ended before you had to go?

BURNS: Well, I got overseas orders and was in New York waiting for a boat to sail overseas when orders for overseas were cancelled and we were sent down to Taylor Field, Montgomery, Alabama, to open a new flying school.

WBP: I see.

Were you ever involved in any crashes?



BURNS:       Yep. Had one, landed in a cotton field and didn't hurt the plane much, didn't hurt me much.

WBP:           What happened? Did the engine conk out?

BURNS:       Well, as soon as I took off, the plane kept working to the right all the time. I was in a field where I was supposed to try left, and I couldn't get it straightened out. And finally it . . . in my trying to straighten it out, it went into a spin and I landed in a cotton field.

WBP:           Oh, good heavens!

BURNS:       It went down easy, and I remember the commanding officer came over in a motorcycle and picked some cotton and said, "It isn't everyone can land in a cotton field."

WBP:           (laughs) Were you hurt at all?

BURNS:       No. Just shook up a little.

WBP:           Uh-huh. It didn't frighten you?

BURNS:       No.

WBP:           You mentioned earlier that there were many of your classmates that were killed, learning to fly or flying those old planes?

BURNS:       Yes. About a third of . . . I think it was about 35 of us that graduated from ground school at Ohio State and were sent to Wichita Falls and Taylor Field. And as I remember there were about a third of them that were lost before they got into advanced training.

WBP:           Then after your military service, you returned to Terre Haute. Did you live here the rest of your life?

BURNS:       Well, I returned to Terre Haute and worked at the south mill (where we are now). And I'd get sent out to Rockford, Illinois, to our paper mill up there for a while. And then back to Terre Haute and then again over to St. Marys, Ohio, to our board mill and back to Terre Haute. From about 1919 to 1923 I spent

BURNS: two hitches at Rockford, two hitches at St. Marys, and always back to Terre Haute.

WBP: How long would the hitches be?

BURNS: Oh, maybe a year, maybe a little longer, maybe not so long.

WBP: So, you were able then to compare Terre Haute with some of the other cities in the nation . . . in the Midwest during this time. But those . . . were those smaller towns?

BURNS: Rockford was, I believe, a little larger than Terre Haute and a beautiful city. And St. Marys was a town of about 5,000, which I really loved.

WBP: Did you come back to Terre Haute basically because the company needed you here?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Or did you come . . . oh, I see.

BURNS: They would move me wherever they needed me.

WBP: So you didn't really have a choice there?

BURNS: No.

WBP: What in your view was different about Terre Haute from the other cities? What do you feel was distinctive about Terre Haute or unique?

BURNS: Well, as you probably know, Terre Haute was a strong labor town. And also most of the time it was administered by the Democratic party. And I believe I noticed the difference in Rockford -- although I wasn't interested in politics -- but Rockford seemed to be a cleaner city and more aggressive businesswise.

WBP: When you say Democratic party, are you talking about a machine, a political machine? Machine politics?

BURNS: Well, not exactly, but I just think that the Democrats were . . . there were more of them in Terre

BURNS: Haute, and often they were in power. Although I remember during Donn Roberts' time -- although I wasn't here all that time -- but the Republicans were in bad repute.

WBP: Are you basically saying that you're not . . . the quality of public life or the quality of politics was not necessarily the best here?

BURNS: I'd say that.

WBP: Why in your view were the Democrats so strong?

BURNS: I think because it was a labor town. Eugene Debs lived here. I knew Eugene Debs. I was just a youngster, but he passed our house when we moved on North 8th Street. He lived in the next square above us. He was a kindly old gentleman, always said hello.

WBP: That's how you remember him?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Did you have any other dealings with him?

BURNS: No. I was young you know.

WBP: Where would you see him on the street just . . .

BURNS: He lived in about the 400 block on North 8th Street, and we lived in the 300 block, so he would pass our house going to town -- probably going to his office.

WBP: You knew that he was an important political figure, so I suppose you were particularly alert to the fact that here was Mr. Debs coming.

BURNS: Yep, I thought he was something special. But I didn't know really why.

WBP: Yes.

Did you know anything about people's attitudes toward him? The community's attitude? Did they generally like him and support him or were they a little skeptical?

BURNS: Well, I think that the laboring man, of course, respected him. And I imagine that businessmen, who were probably Republicans, didn't respect him. But it seems to me that in general he was liked, you know.

WBP: Was your father a Republican?

BURNS: Yes, and my grandfather was.

WBP: And you're a Republican.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Do you remember your father saying anything about Debs?

BURNS: About Debs?

WBP: Yeah. Did he speak to you?

BURNS: I can't remember a word. I think probably he liked him, because he'd see him once in a while you know.

WBP: In your view . . . are you saying that basically you feel that the Republican party was at something of a disadvantage and that the business community perhaps was, too?

BURNS: Yes. It was a labor union town. And whether that was good for Terre Haute, I doubt.

WBP: Explain that. How do you mean?

BURNS: The reputation that Terre Haute had discouraged other industry from coming here.

WBP: Was that a fair reputation?

BURNS: I base that on the fact that several -- and one I know of for sure -- industries left Terre Haute because of the labor situation.

WBP: Can you tell what industries those were?

BURNS: I think that it was an industry that made maybe working men's clothing.

WBP: Did the Ehrmann company do that, Max Ehrmann's uncles?

BURNS: That might have been the one.

WBP: They made . . .

BURNS: I knew a young man who was about my age in high school and later whose name was Urban. And he was interested in this company and probably owned considerable of the shares, and he moved to Mississippi, I believe, with his company.

WBP: Are there any other companies that you know who either did not come to Terre Haute or . . .

BURNS: No.

WBP: . . . or left Terre Haute?

BURNS: No. I don't know.

WBP: This was . . . would you say this was in the 1920s that you're talking about?

BURNS: Yes. I believe it was.

WBP: Is there other evidence . . . are there other reasons besides the fact that Terre Haute was the birthplace and home of Eugene Debs, that caused labor to be strong? What else made labor so strong in Terre Haute? It seemed to be stronger in Terre Haute than in many other Indiana cities.

BURNS: Well, one thing, the coal miners' was a strong union, and there were a lot of coal miners in Terre Haute.

WBP: Yes. So that had . . . they were a strong influence then. They influenced the unions in other industries.

What about in your experience was labor, the strength of labor a disadvantage for the Terre Haute Paper Company?

BURNS: No. We were non union for a long time. That

BURNS: doesn't sound just right, but we were not organized for a long time.

WBP: Was that because basically the workers were satisfied?

BURNS: I believe so. I remember when I was real young working at the mill, during vacations and all, that the manager, Mr. W. G. Clark, talked to the men, who were working 12 hours a day -- which I was, too -- and asked them if they would like to go on 8 hours. And they said no, they preferred to stay on 12 hours because they could make more money.

WBP: Uh-huh!

So, in your view, labor wasn't a problem. I mean in your experience.

BURNS: Oh, I would say that it's . . . with every other plant manager that the union is a problem, because you have grievances and sometimes they're difficult to handle.

WBP: Were most companies . . . were most industries in Terre Haute union shops?

BURNS: I don't think at first, but later they became.

WBP: And when did Weston Paper become union. Unionized?

BURNS: Well, I imagine in 19 . . . in the 1930s or '40s.

WBP: Do you remember any major difficulties over the years [that] the city of Terre Haute had?

BURNS: Oh, one time -- for the reason I can't remember -- there was a crowd of union members that went all over town shutting down every plant. They got a lot of publicity and wasn't a good influence to Terre Haute.

WBP: Do you remember when that was?

BURNS: No, I can't remember.

WBP: Are you talking about the general strike?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP:           Nineteen ~~/hundred~~ thirty-five.

BURNS:        Yep. Is that it? Yep.

WBP:           Did the Depression affect Weston Paper?

BURNS:        Yep. We managed most of the time to run three or four days a week.

WBP:           That's pretty good then.

BURNS:        Yep.

WBP:           Pretty good.

BURNS:        I was in St. Marys during most of the Depression. And we'd get in a couple of days nearly every week.

WBP:           You said you loved St. Marys. Did you love Terre Haute?

BURNS:        Not in the way I loved St. Marys. I have a different idea of a good town than most people. I think that a good town would be . . . oh, cultured, quality, and strive to be a good town like maybe Columbus, Indiana, and not strive to increase the population, you know. Rather a good small town rather than a big, unwieldy town.

WBP:           Are you saying that Terre Haute did not strive to be a good town?

BURNS:        I think Terre Haute strived to be a good town according to the people who were influential, but their idea of a good town was different from mine.

I think that most people think that a good town is one that's growing and increasing the population all the time and the industry. And I can see how people think that would be a good town. But I'd rather see a small town that was quality.

WBP:           All right. Do you remember people in Terre Haute feeling that Terre Haute should grow, increase in population and industry?

BURNS:        I was on the Chamber of Commerce for several years and you know what a chamber of commerce tries

BURNS: to do - get industry which increases the population and maybe creates more prosperity.

WBP: When you say like Columbus, a good town like Columbus, you're talking about a quality environment? You say . . . you mentioned culture. What kinds of cultural advantages would you've liked to have seen in Terre Haute which didn't come? That Terre Haute did not have?

BURNS: Well, that would deserve a little thinking.

WBP: Do you want to come back to that? We can do that.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: All right.

BURNS: One reason I was thinking . . . I hated to see the Grand Opera House torn down because we really got good New York plays there. I saw Maude Adams there and, oh, so many celebrities.

WBP: Did you see a lot of demolition of old monuments of city and cultural structures?

BURNS: Not many.

WBP: What years were you on the Chamber of Commerce? Do you remember?

BURNS: No. I don't remember.

WBP: Who was the president of the Chamber of Commerce when you were on the Chamber?

BURNS: Well, I believe Tony Hulman was the last one.

WBP: Did Tony Hulman want to see the city grow?

BURNS: I think so. He wanted to see the city be prosperous.

WBP: Did he work to make it grow?

BURNS: I think he worked for the good of Terre Haute. I liked him; I admired him. He's done so much for



BURNS: Terre Haute that, really, people don't know about.

WBP: Should they know?

BURNS: I think it would be nice.

WBP: I think it would, too.

What kinds of things did he do that you think people should know that he did?

BURNS: Well, I think that his charity and his contributions to colleges, St. Mary [of-the-Woods], Rose [Hulman] and . . .

END OF SIDE 1

TAPE 1-SIDE 2

WBP: Well, he did . . . people do know that he contributed money to Rose-Hulman.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Was it his idea for them to change the name of Rose-Hulman from Rose Polytechnic to Rose-Hulman?

BURNS: I don't think so.

WBP: Whose idea was it?

BURNS: John Logan's.

WBP: Do you think it was a good idea?

BURNS: No. I don't think that Tony felt especially honored. He was a modest man.

WBP. You say you do not think he felt especially honored?

BURNS: I don't think he did. I didn't know Tony as well as my brother. My brother was Tony's age. They were inseparable when they were 16, 17, 18. They were both very interested in athletics.

WBP: Are there some things that Tony did for the city

WBP: as Chamber of Commerce president or in later years that not very many people know about?

BURNS: I just can't remember.

WBP: Did he have anything to do with the new industrial park where CBS is now?

BURNS: I think that he was interested in . . . yes, and I think he was interested in many activities or industries in Terre Haute that no one ever knew about.

WBP: He helped them in ways that other people didn't know?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Financial help?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Did he help Weston Paper?

BURNS: No, we never needed help.

WBP: But he did help other companies?

BURNS: I think so, but by investing in them.

WBP: I see.

And you say he was interested in the welfare of Terre Haute. Are you also saying that he thought it probably should grow and try to attract new industry.

BURNS: Yep, I think that, because of his interest in the Chamber of Commerce.

WBP: Well, of course, Terre Haute did attract new industry over the years. But it didn't grow in population, because it seemed to lose industry at the same time.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Or it seemed to lose people at the same time. How do you account for that?

BURNS: I don't know. I've often wondered. Terre Haute

BURNS: had the highways, the railroads, the coal, and the water. And I always wondered why South Bend and Fort Wayne and Evansville ran away from us. So, what was it?

WBP: Well, maybe it had something to do with those things that made Terre Haute distinctive or unique. You mention labor. You also mentioned the Democratic politics, /the/ Democratic party and its strength, and the quality of public service, I suppose -- the quality of government, local government.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: And would you say those all have something to do with it?

BURNS: They must.

WBP: Is there anything else you can think of that makes Terre Haute different in that regard?

BURNS: No, I can't think of any.

WBP: Well, I . . .

BURNS: But then I've always wondered why Fort Wayne South Bend, and Evansville grew and Terre Haute didn't.

WBP: Is it possible that people, the city fathers really didn't care whether it grew or not, and didn't think growth was necessarily that good? And therefore didn't try as hard as the city fathers in other cities?

BURNS: I think the city fathers would like to have seen it grow. But why . . .

WBP: And you're saying they tried hard to do that.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Did you try? You told me a minute ago that you thought that growth wasn't necessarily good.

BURNS: No, I've always liked a small town and a good, small town. I really don't like cities.

WBP: Did you like . . . by and large, did you like

WBP: living in Terre Haute?

BURNS: I've enjoyed living in Terre Haute. I think Terre Haute, as a city, isn't good, but on the other hand, the people are. I've always enjoyed the people in Terre Haute.

WBP: As a city it isn't good. You mentioned earlier . . . you talked about dirtiness, it's dirtier than other cities.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Again, can you account for that?

BURNS: Well, I really don't know, but I know that it isn't as pretty and as clean as Copenhagen.

WBP: Yes. (laughs) That's right. That's certainly true.

The people are good. What are you thinking of when you think of people being good?

BURNS: Well, I've made many friends. And I enjoyed the social group I used to be in when they were living and my wife was living. And my sister and her husband lived here -- Dr. Cohen Lockett. He's gone. And all my neighbors I've enjoyed, and I've lived in two or three different parts of the city. I like Terre Haute.

WBP: Would you say that it has some of the qualities of a small town even though it's a large town?

BURNS: Oh, I prefer small towns.

WBP: But it has . . . what I'm saying is, does it have friendly people like you would expect a small town to have? Or maybe that's . . . is that why you like a small town?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Over the years, who would you consider to be the most influential people in Terre Haute? In terms of shaping the economy and maybe public policy as well?

BURNS: Well, I think the Hulman family was one. And

BURNS: what other families were long established in business here? Prox, Fairbanks, Ijams . . .

WBP: What about in later years?

BURNS: Later years?

WBP: Hulman still?

BURNS: Yep.

WBP: Would you say that Tony Hulman's wealth put him in a separate class?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: He was wealthier than everybody else.

BURNS: Could be. I don't know. We might have mentioned Blumberg there, too. The Blumbergs were good for Terre Haute.

WBP: Cox?

BURNS: Oh, that's . . . Ben comes . . . Ben Cox comes from an old, old family; and I think they were all lawyers. And I imagine that they had some influence in Terre Haute.

WBP: What were the most important institutions, the most influential institutions in Terre Haute? Businesses, corporations?

BURNS: Yeah. Of course, the Hulmans we know that they were and still are.

WBP: Yeah.

BURNS: And Prox, still operating . . .

WBP: Prox is what company?

BURNS: What company?

WBP: Yeah.

BURNS: Oh, foundry. Right up the road here.

WBP: All right.

BURNS: Operated by the young Prox. And it's an old, old institution. And the Eagle Iron Works, Parkers -- they're all old families. They're gone. And . . .

WBP: Were these people . . . were any of them . . . would you say that most of them were Republicans?

BURNS: No. I don't believe. I don't believe Hulmans were Republicans. I don't know.

WBP: I think he was not. He was generally associated with the Democratic party, I think.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Was he ever active in politics in your memory? Tony Hulman, was he ever active in politics?

BURNS: I don't think so. I think he was influential in politics, but not . . . that is, I imagine he and Birch Bayh were pretty close friends.

WBP: Did Hulman own . . . in your knowledge, did Tony Hulman own any newspaper?

BURNS: I think so.

WBP: He owned the newspapers here in town. Outside of town? In any other cities?

BURNS: I don't think so.

WBP: Would you say Tony Hulman then was by far the most influential person in the city of Terre Haute? During his life or his adulthood?

BURNS: I don't believe he exerted his influence.

WBP: He was a potential influence but not real?

BURNS: I don't think he exerted influence. I just don't think he was interested in telling the newspapers, you know, what to publish and so forth. I don't believe he was.

WBP: In your memory, what were his main interests?

BURNS: What was his main interest? Later it became the Speedway. Before that I can't single out any one particular interest.

WBP: His company?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Would you call him a good businessman?

BURNS: I think so.

WBP: Did he manage his money wisely in your view?

BURNS: I think so.

WBP: From the point of view of a businessman?

BURNS: I think so, and I think that he had that good characteristic of employing good men.

WBP: He could identify good people and he'd hire them.

BURNS: That's right.

WBP: O.K.

You say he was a modest man. Can you remember instances of his modesty? Specific instances? Except for the fact that he apparently did not . . . it was not his idea to name Rose Polytechnic, Rose-Hulman.

BURNS: Well, the fact that the people of Terre Haute didn't know how many things that he'd done for Terre Haute.

WBP: And they could have since he owned the newspapers.

BURNS: Yes, if he'd thought of it, you know.

WBP: You would not call him a booster, a city booster then?

BURNS: No, I wouldn't call him a booster. In the eager-beaver type you know, but . . .

WBP: In the sense of the stereotype local chamber of commerce person or realtor or . . . I suppose, a man

WBP: who may illustrate those characteristics would be a Homer Capehart, that type of person.

BURNS: Yes. He wasn't like that.

WBP: He was not like that.

BURNS: No.

WBP: When did you first notice that the downtown was changing from being a place where there were cars and people and an impacted area to not-so-busy and some of the businesses were beginning to move out? Do you remember when that began?

BURNS: Not exactly.

When did we have our first outside-of-town . . .

WBP: Shopping mall?

BURNS: Yep.

WBP: I believe Honey Creek opened in about 1970, '71. And so that would be . . .

BURNS: Was that before the one out east?

WBP: No, the [Hulman] Meadows, I think, was in the '50s, mid-'50s.

BURNS: Yes. That was the beginning, I believe.

WBP: Was that a Hulman development -- Meadows shopping center?

BURNS: I really don't know. I wouldn't be surprised.

WBP: I think it may have been.

BURNS: Yep.

WBP: But Meadows was the first suburban shopping mall around here.

BURNS: I think so.

WBP: But then later or with the Interstate . . . the coming of the Interstate . . .



BURNS:           Yep.

WBP:            Did you know any of the downtown merchants?

BURNS:           Did I know . . .?

WBP:            Any of the downtown landowners, or property owners downtown?

BURNS:           No.

WBP:            O.K. So, you would have no reason to . . .

BURNS:           If I did, I don't remember it. I might have known them and never known that they . . .

WBP:            /Benjamin/ Blumberg, for instance?

BURNS:           Oh, yes. I knew Blumberg. I admired him very much.

WBP:            Ben Blumberg?

BURNS:           Yes.

WBP:            But he didn't talk with you about property values or tax rates or . . .

BURNS:           No. I was on the board . . . maybe the Vigo County Fairgrounds board with Ben.

WBP:            Good.

BURNS:           Probably on some others.

WBP:            Did you know Miller of Columbus, Indiana?

BURNS:           Do I know a Miller?

WBP:            Yeah, J. Irwin Miller?

BURNS:           No.

WBP:            You never . . . did not know him?

Were there ever times when Weston Paper tried to attract people to come to work here -- perhaps engineers, executives and had difficulty because they did not want to live in Terre Haute?

BURNS: No.

WBP: O.K. That's never been an issue?

BURNS: No, no.

Most of the employees at the Terre Haute Paper Company or Weston have been residents of Terre Haute and have come to work here and the company has paid them. I always liked that.

WBP: It's been a good thing for the people who worked for the company.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: What about organizations? Would you consider Terre Haute to be a city that had more than the usual number of fraternal and civic service clubs and organizations?

BURNS: It sort of seems to me that it's that way.

WBP: Fairly highly organized?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: A lot of different organizations a man can join.

BURNS: Yes. I think so.

WBP: Is there any one organization that . . . such as the Kiwanis or Optimist or Rotary that you consider to be more influential than others?

BURNS: Oh, I would be prejudiced, I guess, to the Rotary Club because my father was charter member or something like that.

WBP: Uh-huh. But the members of Rotary Club have traditionally held positions of power in the community, have they not?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP. Bank presidents, corporate presidents, college presidents?

BURNS: That's right.

WBP: Has that been true through the years?

BURNS: I believe. I've never been particularly interested, because I never joined any of them I guess. But I just don't like to know that I have to be someplace every Tuesday or . . . because of my business, because of travels and because of . . . maybe selfish with my own time, you know.

WBP: Sure.

You spent a lot of time big game hunting, have you not?

BURNS: That's right.

WBP: Throughout your life did you try to be away one or two months a year or . . .

BURNS: Yeah, for a number of years I lived in a tent about two months every year, you know.

WBP: Oh, did you?

BURNS: Yes, with my hunting and my trail riding and my horse activity.

WBP: You're also an author, are you not?

BURNS: I've written outdoor stories.

WBP: You wrote a book entitled The Roving Outdoorsman.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Did it sell pretty well?

BURNS: Well, it did just what we expected. We wanted to sell enough to come out even, and we did. I often say that I wrote the book because when my grandsons or granddaughters went to Washington . . . went to the library, the big library there, /and/ they ask for my book, they could find it.

WBP: (laughs) Yes. Library of Congress?

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: But you've traveled all around the world big game hunting?

BURNS: I've been to Africa, New Zealand, South America, Arctic -- up through Norway to the Arctic -- and nearly all over the United States and Canada, Alaska. I had a nice life.

WBP: Sounds like it.

What were your favorite trophies?

BURNS: Oh, I guess the elephant. I really . . . I was never a trophy hunter. I didn't really intend to shoot an elephant when I went to Africa.

WBP: Oh?

BURNS: But your guide -- your white hunter -- stakes his reputation on his client getting the Big Five; that's the elephant, the lion, the leopard, the buffalo.

WBP: Rhinoceros?

BURNS: Yeah. And he persuaded me to leave my money for an elephant license at the headquarters of the game association in Nairobi, because he thought he might persuade me to get an elephant. And we changed camp, moved down along the . . . I've forgotten the name of the river. And there were 19 elephants out there spraying each other. He said, "Now's the time you get the elephant." (laughs)

So, he drove someplace to a telephone and told the game people in Nairobi to announce the number of my elephant license that night. We had a radio and we heard, "Fox Burns, Fox Burns, your elephant license is number so-and-so." He said, "Now we go!" And we really did go! For ten days before (laughing) we ever caught up with one that . . .

WBP: Oh, really!

BURNS: . . . had suitable ivory. (laughing)

WBP: I see!

What year was that? Do you remember?

BURNS: Oh, 1959 or '60.

WBP: I see. It had to be a certain size before you could shoot it?

BURNS: Well, the ivory is what . . . you want a good ivory.

WBP: I see.

BURNS: Two tusks that are symmetrical, you know. You've seen them. . . have you ever seen them?

WBP: I don't believe so . . . I . . .

BURNS: See that picture? See how symmetrical they are?

WBP: Are those out at Rose-Hulman?

BURNS: Yeah.

WBP: All right. I've seen them.

BURNS: Yeah. They're . . . I was so lucky.

WBP: Oh, those are nice. Ha!

Is there any large game animal that you have not hunted?

BURNS: Yes. I've hunted for grizzly /bear/; I never got a grizzly.

WBP: Oh, really?

BURNS: Tried and tried. Got black bear, got Kodiak bear, got every kind of bear but grizzly. If I wasn't so damned old, I'd . . . we're not on this thing, are we now?

WBP: Yeah, we're on it!

BURNS: Are we? Well, if I wasn't so old, I'd be still trying to get a grizzly. (laughs)

WBP: (laughs) I would assume that out at Yellowstone or Glacier /National Park/ that they . . . every now and then they have to shoot a grizzly.

BURNS: Yep, yep.

WBP: They probably have them located. They could probably take you up there in a helicopter. That'd be interesting. That's an exciting life, indeed.

BURNS: It's a good life on safari in Africa. You have so many helpers, you know.

WBP: Uh-huh.

Well, if you had to choose between a . . . if you're talking about the most important forces for change in Terre Haute over the years, would you say it had to do with the community attitudes or people's attitudes toward Terre Haute or would you say it was just a matter of changing transportation technology from street railways and interurbans and then automobiles, too -- the Interstate automobile system? What's most important -- the technological change or the people's attitudes toward Terre Haute?

BURNS: I believe it's attitude. And now money, you know, to make changes that would beautify the city, make more convenient parking and . . .

WBP: How would you . . . if you could realize your ideal, how would you like to see Terre Haute change? What . . . you're talking about beautifying it, parking . . . what would you do?

BURNS: Well, parking is a problem in Terre Haute, and I would think it would be an improvement if we could make convenient parking. That would be expensive, out of the question. And I think that we should have more improved and beautified parks. See, when I get to thinking about making the city beautiful, I always think of Copenhagen. Have you ever been over . . .

WBP: I've not been in Copenhagen. I've heard of Copenhagen; I've been in other European cities. I've been in Amsterdam.

BURNS: Yes. The park?

WBP: The Tivoli?

BURNS: Tivoli? Yeah. That's the cleanest place in the world! And people are eating and drinking and everything, but never do you see any scrap or waste on the lawns, all pretty flowers and all.

WBP: They seem to take pride in the city and to clean it in its beauty.

BURNS: Yes. And then in their downtown they have what you might call Main Street, and /there is/ no traffic on it. People walk down in the middle of the street and every which way. Cross when they want to, you know.

WBP: So, automobiles don't interfere with pedestrian traffic?

BURNS: No. All of them ride bicycles. That's the reason we drive automobiles over here. We build it and then tear it down in a couple of years and build it again, you know, and . . .

WBP: Yes. We don't have a conservation ethic.

BURNS: That's right.

WBP: We don't seem to see the importance of living with nature.

BURNS: Over there /you/ see old apartment buildings, a hundred years old! Pretty. Flowers in the window, you know. Of course, we were there when the nice . . . people out in the parks, beautiful parks, big parks.

WBP: Then you were sorry, probably, to see some of the old landmarks downtown come down?

BURNS: Yep.

WBP: You've seen one Terre Haute House come down in your lifetime.

BURNS: Yes. Two! /He corrects this statement below./

WBP: Did you see the old Prairie House come down?

BURNS: Yeah. When we used to come up here from the mines, you know, on a freight train. My father and mother would come to Terre Haute once in a great while. /They would/ ride a freight train from Jackson Hill. I was 5 or 6 years old. We'd stay at the old Terre Haute House. And I remember how interesting it was. My mother and I . . . my dad was on business. My

BURNS: mother and I would sit up . . . it was sort of a balcony overlooking the lobby and watch the people, you know. And at meals have such courteous and polite colored men. It really impressed me then, because I was about 6 or 7 years old.

WBP: This is in . . . this was not the Prairie House though. It was the Terre Haute House.

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Yeah. And so you've seen that Terre Haute House come down and then the other one . . . the present one built in 1928 [actually, 1927].

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: But now it's empty. It's a danger I suppose. It's an endangered specie. And, of course, the Root Store -- you've seen it come down. You've seen a number of fires in the downtown area. The old . . .

BURNS: In fact, I don't know Terre Haute. I don't know downtown. I don't . . . I only go up there about maybe once or twice a year. I'm never up there.

WBP: What about racial relations in Terre Haute?

BURNS: Well, I don't think they're real bad. Of course, I think we have some feeling between the blacks and the whites. But I have friends and have a lot of blacks work for me, you know. I always got along with them well. So, I don't think it's . . . the racial situation is not bad in Terre Haute.

WBP: Have you ever . . . have you thought of Terre Haute as a city of different ethnic groups -- Irish, Hungarians, or Germans, Italians . . .

BURNS: Yes.

WBP: Have you?

BURNS: Uh-huh. Yes.

WBP: It's always had a number of different ethnic communities. Maybe that had something to do with the political situation?



BURNS: Could be.

WBP: What about people's attitude . . . would you say that they were perhaps more interested in their own lives and their own business than they were in the community as a whole?

BURNS: I think so.

WBP: So, it was individualistic?

BURNS: Yes. I think they are.

WBP: Perhaps more so than in other cities?

BURNS: It might be.

WBP: Was there an anti-labor feeling among businessmen? Was there a feeling that . . .

BURNS: I don't think it would be anti-labor. I rather think that they were, maybe, disappointed in the fact that labor was such an influence in Terre Haute.

WBP: Did they do anything to try to overcome that?

BURNS: No. Not that I know of.

WBP: Was there ever fear of socialism?

BURNS: I don't believe . . . . Although Gene Debs, wasn't he . . .

WBP: He was a Socialist.

BURNS: . . . candidate for President at one time?

WBP: Yes, that's right.

BURNS: I don't think his influence politically in Terre Haute amounted to much.

WBP: Basically, you're saying that . . . are you saying then that labor, while they populated the Democratic ranks, were not radical labor? There was not a radical labor movement?

BURNS: I don't think.

WBP:           What about the Ku Klux Klan? In your knowledge,  
          was there ever . . .

BURNS:           I think it was very active in Terre Haute.

WBP:           During what years?

BURNS:           I wish I could remember.

WBP:           Is it still active?

BURNS:           If it is, I don't know.

WBP:           So, there might have been . . . if the Klan was  
          active, there might have been a secret organization  
          which acted to try to intimidate would-be socialists  
          or blacks or Jews?

BURNS:           No, I don't think this.

WBP:           In your knowledge, was there any anti-semitism,  
          anti-Jewish feeling?

BURNS:           No, I don't think so.

WBP:           Did the Jewish community . . . was it fairly  
          prominent in the city?

BURNS:           What's that again now?

WBP:           Was the Jewish community fairly prominent . . .  
          fairly prominent?

BURNS:           Yes.

WBP:           In local affairs?

BURNS:           Yes. And for good.

WBP:           Blumbergs.

BURNS:           Yes.

WBP:           The Meis? Levins? Silversteins?

BURNS:           I think the Jewish influence in Terre Haute's  
          been good.

WBP:           They've been free then to be businessmen and  
          to pursue their own interests?

BURNS: Yes. And I think Jewish people have been very charitable towards Terre Haute. Ben Blumberg especially.

WBP: Some people have mentioned and I don't know whether it even has merit, but some of the people have mentioned that the downtown property has been owned by people who live elsewhere, outside . . .

BURNS: I've heard that, too!

WBP: . . . and that that might have had some influence.

BURNS: I've heard that, too.

WBP: You don't know about that?

BURNS: No.

WBP: Well, I think that this has been an excellent interview. I've enjoyed talking with you about Terre Haute. Is there anything you'd like to add about your memories of Terre Haute and how it's changed, why it's changed?

BURNS: I just wish there wasn't so much traffic.  
(both laugh)

Youngsters don't seem to mind, you know. They've grown up with it. But four or five years ago I used to leave my house down in Allendale Place, no problem. /I would/ get on the highway, maybe meet a couple of cars. But, boy, it's a problem to get on the highway now, you know.

WBP: Third Street's almost a race track, isn't it?

BURNS: Yes, yes.

WBP: Not only that but it's worse now because there are three lanes of traffic each way.

BURNS: Yes, yeah.

WBP: Instead of just two. So, it virtually cuts the river off. It cuts downtown off from the river, and it makes the people who want to go to Honey Creek have to be race drivers in order to . . .

BURNS: Yep. (laughs)

WBP: . . . get there safely.

BURNS: Yep.

WBP: That's too bad, isn't it?

Maybe . . . wouldn't it be fun to have . . .  
maybe a streetcar again that you could get on and  
just take it to the door of Honey Creek?

BURNS: Yep.

WBP: Or take it downtown and take it to the bank?

BURNS: I told you about . . . are we on now?

WBP: Yes. Go ahead.

BURNS: I used to take my horses down in the fall --  
my dad's horses -- to his friend, Mahan. And then  
I had to walk about 3 miles from there over to the  
interurban that came up from Sullivan. I was only  
11 or 12 years old, and I used to wonder if I'd  
miss that or if it was on its way and when it did  
come, I really flagged it down.

WBP: Yes, yes. At least we don't have to worry about  
that so much.

BURNS: No.

WBP: It's nice not to have to worry about that.

BURNS: I've got this place full of horses out there.

WBP: Do you go horseback riding every day?

BURNS: I try to three or four times a week. In the  
last three or four days the mosquitoes . . . see, we  
own a lot of land down in the bottoms, and we had a  
trail cut through there so you can ride them.  
Beautiful place to ride.

WBP: All the way down to the river.

BURNS: Yes. And the mosquitoes . . . boy! They'd drive  
you . . . they'd run you crazy now!

WBP: Can you put on "Off"?

BURNS: Yeah, but they don't pay any attention to it.

WBP: Doesn't make any difference?

BURNS: No.

WBP: Well, I've enjoyed this, and it sounds as if  
you've had a good life and many more years to come,  
I'm sure.

BURNS: Oh. (laughs)

WBP: Thank you very much.

BURNS: I'd just like to get in shape so I could go  
after a grizzly.

WBP: All right. Well, maybe you will. It seems to me  
you're (laughing) in pretty good shape.

(both laugh)

END OF TAPE

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